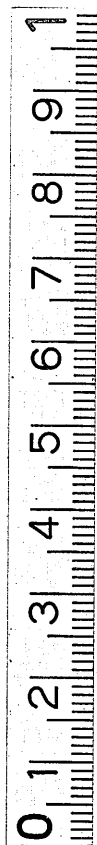


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THE
Occasional Writer.
TO THE
PEOPLE;
AND
FOR the PEOPLE.

*Tho' they have pierced me to the Quick with
Injuries,
Yet with my nobler Reason
I will take part; the rarer Action is
In Virtue than in Vengeance.*

D'AVENANT.

By a Lover of his Country.



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[Price Six Pence.]



T H E
OCCASIONAL WRITER.

T O
The People ; and FOR the
People.

Friends and Countrymen,

LL OW a Man who
never apply'd to you
before, to apply to
you at this Juncture ;
'tis impossible he e-
ver could do it at a more critical
Juncture : You are powerfully
attached ; your Passions and Pre-
judices more strongly than ever
addressed to ; every Engine is at
B Work

[6]

Work that may excite you, not now to Jealousies only, but to Resentment, and the most abandoned Outrage; and should you give into these, what must be the Consequence? You may be drawn in to your Destruction before you are aware, by Men who, rather than not rise, would rise on your Ruin; and whatever you may at present be persuaded to think of the Concern they pretend for your Interest, you certainly could never answer to God or your Consciences, to yourselves or your Families, the being led into Measures, for Want of due Consideration, which must bring upon you unavoidable Distress; and for some time involve us ALL, however guiltless, in unspeakable Calamities and Misery.

FOR

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FOR God's sake therefore, while it is in our Power, let us put a Stop to Evils which, by our Rashness, may become remediless, and produce the most direful Effects; 'tis a sincere, disinterested Affection to our common Good, that engages me to press to this: Let us ask ourselves this one serious Question; What are we doing, my FRIENDS, when we are allowing ourselves to be enflamed by false Reports and Forgeries, or at most, by Rumours, before 'tis possible we can know whether they are true or not?

Is the Happiness we do, and may continue to enjoy; is a national Tranquility so little dear to us, that we can so readily make these a Sacrifice upon every

B 2 flight

[8]

flight Occasion? Can we be such Fools, as not to see there are those among us who don't value what desperate Things they put us upon, if they themselves are but serv'd, and can be but safe? Are the PEOPLE for ever to be a stalking Horse? Are WE to be the everlasting Dupes of ambitious, factious Men, who only make Tools of us, which they are sure to slight or throw away, when their Turns are serv'd? Let us but help them to Greatness; let them raise themselves upon us, to Power and Trust, and perhaps the very first Effects they discover of these, shall be to shew a Contempt and Disregard for those on whose Shoulders they mounted.

THESE we have known to prove true a thousand and a thousand

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thousand Times; yet so large an Experience seems of no Advantage; the Artifices that have prevailed, still prevail; and we that have so often been the Bubbles of artful, aspiring Men, are taken by the same stale Devices whenever they are disposed to practice them.

As far as 'tis in my Power to remove all Distaste to what I have here to offer you, Gentlemen, give me leave to assure you, I never offered you any thing before; I never wrote a Word for you, or against you, in my Life, till this Moment; I detest all slavish Dependancies, as much as any of you can do; at the same time I dread the Thoughts of throwing off all Restraints, of letting an Infatuation get the better of our Understanding and Interest,

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Interest, and of blindly giving into the Extravagancies of ANY PARTY, or coming into the most specious Proposals they could make, without a cool and thorough Examination of their Tendency.

COULD we but once prevail'd with to act in this cautious manner (and it is inconsistent with common Sense, or common Honesty, for us to act otherwise) what Ills might be prevented: how little would it then be in the Power of any Man, or any Set of Men, to impose upon us, or injure us? Stories invented and spread to break our Quiet, and make us uneasy, would be without Force; and a Detection of them would infallibly reach us before it was possible they could do us any harm.

THAT

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THAT publick Incendiaries should be able to carry Matters to Extremities, could do no less than bring upon a Nation many sad desolating Consequences; and tho' a Government was not under the least Apprehension for the Issue, with relation to itself, as no good Government need to be; and tho', for the sake of the Subjects, it would be glad to hinder their doing so; yet such an Event (which, at the same Time, I pray God we may never see) might not be without its Benefits to a Kingdom harrass'd with intestine Enemies: Secret Traitors, who were perpetually sowing Dissentions, and creating causeless Fears among the People, stirring them up to Sedition and Rebellion, and seducing them to Disaffection and Disloyalty to a
lawful

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lawful Sovereign, and his just, mild Administration: Were the Guilty only to suffer by such Extremities, none need care how soon they brought them upon their own Heads: (I was going to say, how much were it to be wish'd) that Justice, by the Sword, might take place, to the rooting out, to the utter extirpating all lawless Disturbers of their Country's Peace, when their unparalleled Infolence bid Defiance to every divine and human Restriction; or when the Mischiefs they threatened their Country with, were no otherwise to be averted.

BUT as Matters are not come to these dangerous Lengths, so is it impossible they ever should, unless we are mad beyond whatever a People were before, and
resolved

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resolved upon our own Destruction: MY COUNTRYMEN, I have no personal Enmity to any of those who have been alarming us; or have I the least Knowledge who they are; 'tis not the Men, but their Conduct, I abhor; and would you but allow yourselves to view that Conduct with Impartiality, and free of all Disguise, as I do, there is not one of you, who loves his Country, but would abhor it too.

THIS has been my Motive; Heaven's my Witness; this unalterable Affection for my Country, which no Time, no Circumstances can ever raze out of my Soul, has put me upon representing in this publick Manner, what I apprehend we can never be true to our own Interest and depart from.

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As I told you before, GENTLEMEN, there is not a Man of you can be more free, or less under ministerial Influences, than myself: I never in my Life saw a Minister of State, but in the Streets; I never finger'd a Farthing of the publick Money; I look for no Place; I hope for no Pension; Providence, I thank it, has sufficiently provided for me and mine: I ask no Favours; I fear no Frowns; Steadfastly loyal I honour and revere my Prince; I pay a proper Obedience to his Majesty's Ministers; but at the same time, I LOVE my COUNTRY with ALL MY HEART.

MY COUNTRYMEN; I fear not even the offending YOU; or value the pleasing of you, in any Proportion to the great Desire I have

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have of becoming serviceable to you; of doing my Country good; and advantageing the common Cause: I should think it, indeed, a Happiness to meet the general Approbation; but this, after all Endeavours, may not be in my Power; however, I'll do my utmost to deserve it; and then shall I, at least, be sure of the Satisfaction (and it is all the Reward I expect) of having discharg'd my Conscience, and done my Duty with Plainness and Faithfulness.

'Tis hardly to be described, how we have lately been terrify'd; what frightful Apprehensions have been instilled, especially into weak Minds: No Terrors have been unessay'd to render this Panick universal; and in many Places it has made shocking Impressions, to say no worse

C 2 of

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of it: Some among us, I fear, in their Bitterness and Rage, have been ready to curse all that they ought to hold in most awful Regard; and, could a DESPERADO have been found equal to the popular Frenzy, 'tis scarcely to be doubted, but, in the Heat of it, you had put him upon leading you into Arms and open Rebellion; and all this without knowing why; without being able to justify one Step to either God or Man.

BUT I would heal, not wound; soothe, not reproach: the Actions of People in a Fright, especially under the first Violences of it, are, generally speaking, such as call for our Concern and Commiseration, rather than Censure; and I know no better Way to close this Breach, than to treat
it

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it tenderly; concisely to draw up Matters, and fairly state the Case; and then, in God's Name, for us to act, as we may find just Cause to act.

THERE are none, certainly, can be so weak as to imagine, that the Government is to be frightened, or intimidated by any tumultuous Excesses; that our unjustifiable Noise, or the most daring, furious Efforts, should ever be able to make the Parliament of *Great Britain* recede one Step from a well-weigh'd, steady Pursuit of publick Good: Lord! what would become of us was this to be the Case; we should soon be all undone indeed; and nothing less ought to be look'd for, than immediate Anarchy and Confusion: Could they once be brought but to humour the Ca-
price

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price of the deluded Multitude ; or, to please any particular Bodies of Men, depart from Schemes calculated, and visibly tending towards a general national Good, it would never after be in their Power to remain fix'd to any thing ; the wisest Counsels might be defeated ; and the best Measures that ever Men went into, be blasted and set aside, whenever any Persons, of either desperate Views, or desperate Fortunes, might endeavour to find their Account in exciting the Mob with Success, to be importunate and clamorous.

To draw the present Affair into a proper Compass, let us recollect a little what has been told us : The Outcry has been very great ; we have been made to believe, that we were to be utterly

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terly undone ; wooden Shoes and Shackles seem to be the least we were threatned with ; for nothing that could cause Horror, and raise our Indignation, has been omitted : No Means have been wanting to persuade us, that the very Being of Parliaments was in Danger ; that our Trade was on the Brink of Ruin ; that the Nation was to be impoverished, in order to be oppress'd ; and that our excellent Constitution itself, was to be destroy'd.

HIS MAJESTY has been long represented to us, as aiming at absolute Power ; his Majesty's Ministers, as Instruments of Rapine and Tyranny ; and both jointly designing to beggar and enslave us : And, in order to make a home Push, and bring Matters to the fatal Crisis, that

has

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has long been labour'd for, all these have been laid before us afresh, as what were instantly to be effected by a GENERAL EXCISE, that during the subsisting Session of Parliament, was to be established and take Place among us, with a Standing Army to enforce its Execution: Thus, in a Word, no Endeavours have been wanting to persuade us to a firm Belief that our Doom was irreversible; that we were to be dragoon'd out of all our Liberties, and reduced to a most abject State of Slavery; that whatever was dear to us as Men, or *Britons*, was upon the Point of becoming the Prey of Harpies and Blood-suckers; Excise Officers, Soldiers, and the Minions of Power, who, like an Army of Locust, were just ready to devour the Land, and subject the
once

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once happy Inhabitants, to worse than a Romish Inquisition.

As this is but a short View of the Methods that have been used to throw us into a Flame, if you'll accept, GENTLEMEN, of my Opinion of the Matter, I'll give it you in as short a Piece of Advice: If what these People have told us is TRUE; let them be considered by us as our best Friends; as the Guardians of publick Liberty; and let them want no Supports in our Power to afford their generous Designs on Behalf of their Country; but if, on the other Hand, it should appear, that they have been telling us Lies, and abusing us, in hopes of spiring us up to Mischief; let us look upon them as a Set of infamous Villains; and ever after treat them as the most
D aban-

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abandoned of Men; who, for private Ends, would betray us, and involve their native Country in Blood; and it is but too evident, that the latter is the State of the Case.

How secure abroad, how safe and satisfied at home, might we live, was it not for a few of these Instruments of Wickedness, who, at all Hazards, would blow up the Coals among us, and seem to value themselves in Proportion to the publick Injuries they are capable of: Our Trade and Manufactures thrive, and are encouraged; we have Peace and Plenty, and abound in Affluence; we have nothing to fear, and but little more to wish; Heaven and Earth, God and Man, are jointly contributing to our national Prosperity;

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prosperity; and none can hurt us but ourselves.

To ask what Law has been broken; whose Property invaded; or what Exorbitancies prevail; what we have to complain of, would be but faint; and, perhaps, as usual, the Answer might be a Sneer; but, God be thanked, we can with Truth go much farther; 'tis certain we are in full Possession of all our Rights and Privileges; never was the Nation indulged in greater Liberties; never was it more perfectly free: We may look upon ourselves as arrived at a Period in which we might have whatever was fit for us to ask or expect: We have a Prince on the Throne who holds Happiness out to us for our Acceptance: His Majesty desires to become the common Father of all

D 2 his

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his People: He desires to have an Empire in our Hearts; to found his Greatness alone on our Good; and, were we not Enemies to ourselves, it might be the distinguishing Glory of this beneficent Reign, that we fully enjoyed all our great Forefathers bravely fought and conquer'd for; or as bravely died for, when overcome; all, for which so many Traytors have died, so many Tyrants have bled; and what is infinitely more, so many true Patriots: Were those glorious Fellows but to look out of their Graves, how would they curse the Madness and Folly of the present Generation, who allow themselves to be wheedled and cajoled out of their Happiness? who needlessly risque such a national Establishment as they cheerfully laid down their Lives
and

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and Treasure in hopes of; Curse us (and that justly too) for undervaluing, or, at least, being insensible of Blessings which, tho' they could not obtain for themselves, yet, to have secured them for their Posterity, they would have thought vastly more than a Recompence for all the dear Attempt cost them; for Ages of Labour, and Seas of Blood.

To come closer to the Topics which have been so fruitful of indecent Exclamations; and with which the Nation in general has been intoxicated, how has it been almost in every Mouth, that we were sold and betrayed by those we have trusted; that a Standing Army was Proof sufficient that we are all to be made Slaves of? and that it was certain that the more hideous

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ous Monster, a GENERAL EX-
CISE, was just ready to devour
us? In how pathetick a manner
have the Calamities that were
said to threaten our dear Country,
been represented to us? what
Letters and Instructions to Re-
presentatives, tho' most of them
clandestinely, surreptitiously, or
by more scandalous Methods, ob-
tained and published, have the
World been Witnesses to? When,
God knows, there was nothing
in all these but common Artifice;
such as Malecontents and Incen-
diaries have always practised, and
always will practise, whilst Male-
contents and Incendiaries remain
among us; whilst there are Fools
to believe what Knaves divulge.

W H E N we consider all the
powerful Nations around us in
Arms, and how instantly they
might

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might enter upon Action, how
dangerous does any Diminution
of the present Number of Forces
upon the Establishment appear?
How, rather, should we expect to
see them increased than lessened?
Would it not be hazardous, and
might it not be highly injurious
to the Publick, to have a less
Number on Foot than what might
render us secure from foreign or
domestick Enemies? A less Num-
ber than would be sufficient to
make good our Engagements with
our faithful Allies, confirm the
Wavering, deter the Enterpriz-
ing, and give a proper Weight
to our National Proceedings with
the Powers Abroad? But this has
been already so fully, and so
much to general Satisfaction
spoken to, that there can be but
little Occasion to say more; es-
pecially, since there is no one
hardly

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hardly among us, who does not readily acquiesce in the Reasonableness of maintaining the subsisting Corps, but who would be equally loud against them, were they reduced to half the Number; or did they think there was but a Man too many kept up, for the Machinations that are carrying on against the Constitution, to be attended with Success.

THUS, my Countrymen, we appear to have got pretty well over our Fears of a Standing Army; but the more frightful Devil, it seems, is left behind; but if this should be found to have nothing ghastly belonging to him, what sort of Devils must they be who have made such a devilish Work about him, and frighten half the Kingdom out of half their

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their Senses, with their hellish Descriptions of him.

BUT, to be more serious, The Day is come, my Friends, or very near at Hand, when this grand ministerial Arcanum, which we have lived so long in the direful Apprehensions of, will be brought to light, and laid open to the whole World; but was it to be kept back from us, and to be yet Months, or even Years, in reserve, we need not doubt, by what we have found, but that there are those among us, who would continue, if possible, to keep our Passions and Prejudices enflamed, 'till, perhaps, a Discovery made us ashamed of our Credulity; tho' they were Poof against being troubled with the least Remorse for all the injurious Abuses, and rancrous

E Defa-

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Defamations they had been the Authors of.

BUT this is not like to be the Case; and we hourly expect a full Discovery of the Secret; when, notwithstanding the impudent Suggestion dictated for a Parcel of poor * Fishermen, we may depend upon it, COUNTRYMEN, that all that ever was designed by the Ministry, the whole of the Scheme, which has made such a dreadful Din among us, will (and, I dare say, with Impunity too) be offered to the Parliament; and, if after all, there should be nothing dreadful in it, what shall we be able to say for ourselves; or how, in God's Name, shall we justify our Conduct? May the Lord have Mercy upon those who have been

* Vide a Letter from Rye in the London Evening-Post, of the 27th of February.

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been for setting us together by the Ears about it; for nothing in this World, certainly, can be too bad for them.

BUT, what if it should appear that this Scheme, we have been furnished with such frightful Ideas of, should not only be inoffensive, but highly beneficial? How, if instead of being big with National Distress, ruinous to Commerce, and destructive to Liberty, it should prove serviceable to the fair Trader, tend to the lessening our National Debts, and remove the Burthen of Taxes from the Manufactures, and the poor Manufacturers most pressed with them; and all this without infringing on our Rights as Englishmen, breaking in upon that inestimable Privilege of Trials by Juries; or without dangerously increasing Dependancies

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on the Crown; should it display itself in this aimable Light, what Confusion must we be under, and how heartily shall we abhor a Pack of Malignants, who have been the Cause of that Confusion.

MEN of Impartiality and Sense, are not to be misled by Sounds; ignominious Terms, and odious Epithets, have their Weight, indeed, with the Mob, and are often given out to provoke them to Outrage; but they can move none but a Mob, unless to Detestation: I declare, upon my Soul, I know no more what the Administration have to propose, in Relation to the Alterations talked of in the Method for collecting the Revenue, than the Child unborn; yet, whatever approbious Names it is called by, if the Ministry have a Scheme that can, in any Degree,
answer

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answer such valuable Purposes as these, we must be more than mad to oppose it under any Denomination whatever.

THO', if this should not be the exact State of the Matter, to put it in another Light, let us imagine, for once, that here is a Proposal made by those who, in the Sincerity of their Hearts made it, as apprehending it would prove advantageous to the Publick; but when, upon a full Examination, it was found defective, as readily laid it aside as we could desire: But whether any of these, or what else is the Case, 'tis yet all Surmise; and for God's sake do not let us run distracted, and be ready to cut one another's Throats upon Surmises only.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the virulent Things said, or that may be said, if the Proposal is good,
'twill

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'twill be receiv'd ; if bad, reject-
 ed ; 'twill be examined with the
 greatest Care ; be fully and fair-
 ly debated ; and, as in Duty we
 ought, let us calmly wait the E-
 vent : Depend upon it we are in
 good Hands ; the Parliament can-
 not now be deceived themselves ;
 nor will they let us be impos'd
 on ; and all the World should not,
 without sufficient Reason, be able
 to make us distrust the Care of
 the Administration, or the pecu-
 liar Goodness and Tenderness of
 his Majesty to his People, upon
 this extraordinary Occasion. *I am,*

GENTLEMEN,

Feb. 28.

Your most humble,

1733.

faithful Servant,

The Occasional Writer.